

Awake, and
Christ will give
you **Light**

Feikoab Parimah

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DEDICATION

With much love to my siblings, George, Patience, Saban and Noah. I thank the Lord for your lives.

INTRODUCTION

When spiritual babes, children or women become our leaders and bishops, then our case is serious indeed. A backslidden generation or people are known by such characteristics as God declared concerning Israel; "As for my people, children are their oppressors, and women rule over them. My people, those who lead you cause you to err, and destroy the way of your paths." Isaiah 3:12

These spiritual babes and women always make us feed on 'processed foods' and 'spiritual candies' which even lead to 'tooth decay', such that we can't even take a bite on the meat of the word. For how long will we continue to feed on spiritual garbage and at best always have a feeding bottle in our mouth?

There is really a need for deep rooted repentance in our generation. If not, how can we call businessmen revivalist? Who deceived us to sit by the strange fires of dead devotion; "Behold, all you who kindle a fire, who gird yourselves about with firebrands; walk you in the flame of your fire, and among the brands that you have kindled. This shall you have of my hand; you shall lie

down in sorrow.” Isaiah 50:11

Our generation indeed needs serious spiritual 'surgery' and not smooth talk. So, in the times of darkness, when there is so much deception such that a lot of professing believers are given 'spiritual lullabies' to put them to sleep and dream that God will overlook their sins, there should be the resounding call of Paul to us to awake to righteousness and not to sin.

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There is not a shadow of doubt in my spirit that this generation is largely a backslidden one. For what so many people have as Christianity now is not even close to be called so. Even the very basics of the Christian faith are yet to be grasped. Paul in his letter to the Hebrews challenged the believers of his day to leave the elementary principles of the faith and move on to perfection;

"Therefore leaving the doctrine of the first principles of Christ, let us press on to perfection--not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works, of faith toward God, of the teaching of baptisms, of laying on of hands, of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment." Hebrews 6:1-2

I believe if Paul had been in this generation he would have rather called us to get the fundamentals right before we even talk of moving on to maturity. Ask yourself how many believers are able to grasp the

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teachings of Jesus Christ? If we had grasped it, then Christianity wouldn't have been what it is today. I am therefore grateful to God He is in this end-time opening our eyes to the real state of the church. This, I believe will precipitate repentance thereby saving many from damnation.

It does not really matter the accomplishments of people these days. If they work iniquity it simply means heaven does not know them. Why do we think even the psalmist in his days prayed the following prayer;

"If I cherished sin in my heart, the Lord wouldn't have listened." Psalm 66:18

So far as one creates room for even one sin in his or her heart and does not repent of it, the Lord will not listen to him or her. There are so many people who are engaging in dubious deals and lies and yet claim to be praying to God. They claim their prayers are always being answered but, I wonder who really answers such prayers even in the face of the above mentioned scripture and the one below;

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"But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hidden his face from you, so that he will not hear." Isaiah 59:2

Could it be that Satan is answering some people's prayers? The only thing Satan cannot give is a pure life and right standing with God. He can answer all the fleshy prayers being made today so far as he knows he can keep people in deception. For this reason some unrighteous preachers have gotten what they want in order to carry out their fleshy projects and still think they are right with God. We better learn from the church of the Laodiceans. Upon all they had, Christ was not in their church as the scripture below depicts;

*"Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, then I will come in to him, and will dine with him, and he with me."
Revelation 3:20*

If these preachers really believe it is God who answers their prayers, why do they resort to so many means and strategies just to raise money for their projects. For example, they have to sometimes invite certain preachers (who are now idols) into their church knowing very well such preachers will pull a large

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crowd and consequently lead to an increase in money being raised. If they really believe in God, then they should follow the biblical formula of obedience, prayer and waiting on God to answer and provide in His own time. They should just tell their congregants the needs of the ministry and allow them to be led to give whatever amount the Lord lays upon their hearts. Bible does not teach us to live in disobedience and still expect God to answer us. This was the teaching of Jesus;

"If you remain in me, and my words remain in you, you will ask whatever you desire, and it will be done for you." John 15:7

From the above scripture we notice, we have to first of all abide in the word of God and the word must also abide in us. Afterwards when we ask anything, it is still left to the discretion of God to give to us what we have prayed for in His own time. The truth however is, no true disciple of Christ will be asking for earthly things just to spend prodigally. They ask according to the will of God. The will of God is to seek first the kingdom of God and its righteousness and anything we need for survival on this earth will be added unto us;

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*"But seek first God's Kingdom, and his righteousness;
and all these things will be given to you as well."
Matthew 6:33*

One will therefore ask, how do we pray having the kingdom of God on top of our priority list? To such, I define the kingdom of God according to scripture to be first of all an immaterial thing as advocated by Paul in Romans 14:17.

In view of this, does our prayer list go to uplift righteousness, bring true peace into the souls of men or bring joy into their souls? Even Christ told His disciples, (until the time He was speaking to them) they had not asked anything in His name. He however entreated them to ask, seek and knock and they will receive answers to their request. He consequently gave them a clue as to what they were to ask;

*"Which of you fathers, if your son asks for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, he won't give him a snake instead of a fish, will he? Or if he asks for an egg, he won't give him a scorpion, will he? If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him?"
Luke 11:11-13*

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This goes to buttress what I wrote earlier about the need to seek the kingdom first. The spirit of Christ is the kingdom of God.

*"But if I by the Spirit of God cast out demons, then the Kingdom of God has come upon you."
Matthew 12:28*

All that is in the kingdom is righteousness, peace and joy. The writer of 1John also knew this truth and thus directed his recipients as to what they were to ask for;

"This is the boldness which we have toward him, that, if we ask anything according to his will, he listens to us. And if we know that he listens to us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions which we have asked of him. If anyone sees his brother sinning a sin not leading to death, he shall ask, and God will give him life for those who sin not leading to death. There is a sin leading to death. I don't say that he should make a request concerning this." 1John 5:14-16

Why then are so many folks' prayers these days just earthly? Do we think God is not aware of what we need? Haven't we been informed, our father is fully aware of whatever we need in accordance with

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Matthew 6:32?

The reason why most people are chasing after physical breakthroughs instead of waiting for them to be added unto them (according to God's own discretion and timing) is, they are not in the kingdom neither are they of it. Bible calls them the enemies of the cross;

"For many walk, of whom I told you often, and now tell you even weeping, as the enemies of the cross of Christ, whose end is destruction, whose god is the belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who think about earthly things." Philippians 3:18-19

These enemies of the cross think they have to use the gospel to make money. The Bible makes it clear, they are simply bankrupt of the truth. It does not matter how they preach and jump around with all seriousness. The word concerning them still stands;

"constant friction of people of corrupt minds and destitute of the truth, who suppose that godliness is a means of gain. Withdraw yourself from such." 1Timothy 6:5

You even hear some suggesting that, we need money in order to be happy in this life. Let me however make it

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plain at this juncture that, money may indeed bring you happiness and entertainment but certainly not righteousness, peace and joy (which is only the product of the Holy Spirit). True disciples therefore seek after righteousness, peace and joy. In these dark times they rather cry for an in filling of the Holy Spirit. There is nowhere in scripture which suggests, material possessions help us to live better and glorified lives. These charlatan turned preachers tell their congregants that John 10:10 means we are to live in luxury, in order to make our joy full. I see this as heresy as scriptures nowhere suggest abundant material possessions bring joy. Have we forgotten what Jesus Himself emphatically declared in the following scripture with regard to this subject matter?;

*"He said to them, "Beware! Keep yourselves from covetousness, for a man's life doesn't consist of the abundance of the things which he possesses."
Luke 12:15*

John Piper in his book *A Hunger for God*, makes us to understand that most often it is the seemingly good things or blessings which hinders our hunger for God. He had the following to say in this regard; "The greatest enemy of hunger for God is not poison but apple pie. It

is not the banquet of the wicked that dulls our appetite for heaven, but endless nibbling at the table of the world. It is not the X-rated video, but the prime-time dribble of triviality we drink in every night. For all the ill that Satan can do, when God describes what keeps us from the banquet table of his love, it is a piece of land, a yoke of oxen, and a wife (Luke 14:18-20). The greatest adversary of love to God is not his enemies but his gifts. And the most deadly appetites are not for the poison of evil, but for the simple pleasures of earth. For when these replace an appetite for God himself, the idolatry is scarcely recognizable, and almost incurable". Even the writer of 1John never suggested material possessions bring fullness of joy but on the contrary, taught the following as being a catalyst for the fulfilment of Christian joy;

"that which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us. Yes, and our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son, Jesus Christ. And we write these things to you, that our joy may be fulfilled. This is the message which we have heard from him and announce to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with him and walk in the darkness, we lie, and don't tell the truth." 1John 1:3-6

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The psalmist in his days understood this even more than so many of us who are supposed to be living in a more glorified dispensation. He had this to say as touching the subject matter in view;

"You will show me the path of life. In your presence is fullness of joy. In your right hand there are pleasures forevermore." Psalm 16:11

How do we understand the presence of the Lord to mean in this our dispensation? Is it not the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit and fellowship with spirit filled (led) brethren? The right hand of God signifies the glory of the Lord. It is this glory which brings about pleasure continuously.

In the face of these scriptures, many individuals are not in touch with the risen Lord. They should not forget, a man could preach the word of God and at the end of the day still find himself languishing in the lake of fire. We should then subdue the fleshly desires in our hearts for material gain or possessions and allow the Spirit to reign in our life. This will bring about true righteousness, peace (which the Lord gives and not as the world gives) and joy.

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From what we have learned so far, we recognize, the kingdom of God is not what many think it is. This accounts for the reason why our generation can be said to be one which largely does not know the risen Lord. I will further endeavour to lay bare, truth which will drive home the fact that our generation needs emergency spiritual 'surgery'.

When spiritual babes, children or women become our leaders and bishops, then our case is serious indeed. A backslidden generation or people are known by such characteristics as God declared concerning Israel;

"As for my people, children are their oppressors, and women rule over them. My people, those who lead you cause you to err, and destroy the way of your paths." Isaiah 3:12

Let me start with who a spiritual babe is. According to the scriptures, a spiritual babe is someone who is not skilled in the word of righteousness;

"For everyone who lives on milk is not experienced in the word of righteousness, for he is a baby." Hebrews 5:13

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If one is not therefore skilled in the word of righteousness, how then can he differentiate between what is right and wrong. These days when you call certain things impure, there are even professing believers and teachers who will see nothing wrong with it. They will rather label you to be ignorant or colloquial. The truth is, they don't have developed teeth to consume meat. They are still feeding on milk which makes them vulnerable to the deceptive ways of the devil. It is only babes who are not discerning. They grasp whatever they can find and consume. Some preachers walk into bookshops and grab materials of false prophets, carefully digest them and go to church to in turn poison their congregation with such 'garbage'. In certainty such professors are just spiritual babes, for they cannot go to God for fresh water and food (messages) for their congregation. This is so because they cannot hear God or even understand Him. So then, they always live on processed foods and 'spiritual candies' which even lead to 'tooth decay'.

Babes are those professing believers and preachers who live according to the flesh. Due to this, they can hardly live holy lives as they are weighed down with sin. By the way, what we do based on our choices

determine whether we are babes or not.

Let us now move on to who spiritual children are. According to the scriptures, spiritual children are those who have been washed clean of their sins. Thus, those who have believed in the Lord Jesus Christ. The scripture below attests to this truth;

"I write to you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake." 1John 2:12

If one is therefore washed of his sin, then he is qualified to be a partaker of the kingdom of God. There was even a time in the life of the disciples when Christ called them children as in line with John 13:33.

Though they walked with Him for some time, He still saw them as children. This is simply because they were his followers and as such had the benefit of being partakers of His kingdom. He once told them, it was given to them to know the things which pertained to the kingdom of heaven(Matthew 13:11).

At this point let's look at the spiritual youth. In line with Biblical definition, a spiritual youth is the one who has the word of God firmly rooted in him to the extent that,

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the enemy is not able to outwit him with his devices. Thus, they are not ignorant of the devices of the evil one;

"I have written to you, fathers, because you know him who is from the beginning. I have written to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God remains in you, and you have overcome the evil one." 1John 2:14

From the above scripture, youths are strong such that they are able to overcome the enemy. Let us recognize, the weapons the enemy uses against believers and some preachers are the things of the world. If anyone is overcome by lusts in one way or the other, then he or she is not even a spiritual youth not to talk of a 'father'. There are many leaders and general overseers who fight and grapple over the things of the world. For some it is the love of the things of the world. To others, it is love for positions. There are also those who are so consumed with the craze for titles and accolades, they never want to concentrate on what God has called them to do, but pursue academic titles just to impress men. If God is not leading one to go for such further studies and the person pursues it just to get a category of people

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into his congregation, then the pride of life has popped up its ugly head in that fellows life. I am not implying higher education is bad, only let us not allow the craze for them to become idols in our lives. We should rather make sure such pursuits are in the will of God. If these have so consumed us, then we are not even spiritual youths. Someone will quickly object with this scripture;

"My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. Because you have rejected knowledge, I will also reject you, that you may be no priest to me. Because you have forgotten your God's law, I will also forget your children." Hosea 4:6

It is clear the knowledge God is talking about is not academic or technological knowledge, but the knowledge of Him. Can't you realize most of the woes of men are as a result of advancements in technology? Though it has some benefits, its evils far outweigh the former. For example, genetically modified foods (which are products of scientific innovations) are gradually killing the human race. Bombs and fighter jets are all technological advancements which have in so many ways spelt the doom of the human race. One former US President by name General D. Eisenhower once said

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“Every gun that is made, every warship launched, every rocket fired is, in a sense, a theft from those who hunger and are not fed, those who are cold and are not clothed.” His statement is best understood by the following statistics; in the gulf war in 1992, the war cost the allies half a billion dollars a day. It is said that a fighter plane cost \$150,000,000, a Tomahawk missile cost at least \$569,000, an Air-to-air missile \$700,000, and a Tank shell ranges between \$2,000 and \$36,000. The money spent on all these is capable of alleviating poverty all over the world.

One of the main culprits of violence and immorality is the television set, which is also the invention of man. In man's quest to live in luxury and happiness, he has invented so many things which have turned out to increase his woes. Daniel made it plain that knowledge will increase alright but it is the people who know their God who will do exploits;

"Such as do wickedly against the covenant shall he pervert by flatteries; but the people who know their God shall be strong, and do [exploits]." Daniel 11:32

God does not command us to be well vexed with the knowledge of the world but expects us to glory in the

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fact that we have the right knowledge of Him and not the number of titles or laurels we have achieved;

"but let him who glories glory in this, that he has understanding, and knows me, that I am Yahweh who exercises loving kindness, justice, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, says Yahweh." Jeremiah 9:24

In our days God is rather calling us into deeper knowledge of Him in order for us to give solutions to our generation's problems. When the children of darkness invent certain gadgets which promote evil and immorality to destroy lives, it is the children of God who are expected to preserve lives;

"You are the salt of the earth, but if the salt has lost its flavor, with what will it be salted? It is then good for nothing, but to be cast out and trodden under the feet of men." Matthew 5:13

We should therefore try as much as possible not to allow the pride of life and the like to overcome us or else we are not even spiritual youths. From these analysis, most leaders are not qualified in the first place to lead God's people. How can people be greedy for money

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(covetous) among others and still be General Overseers. Aren't these traces of the world? If they are overpowered by these and so are not qualified to be spiritual youths, why then are they even bishops if the following scripture is anything to go by;

"The overseer therefore must be without reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, sensible, modest, hospitable, good at teaching, not a drinker, not violent, not greedy for money, but gentle, not quarrelsome, not covetous" 1 Timothy 3:2-3

Fathers are those who know God. To know God however, is to walk as Christ walked on the face of this earth;

"This is how we know that we know him: if we keep his commandments. One who says, "I know him," and doesn't keep his commandments, is a liar, and the truth isn't in him. But whoever keeps his word, God's love has most certainly been perfected in him. This is how we know that we are in him: he who says he remains in him ought himself also to walk just like he walked. . . I write to you, fathers, because you know him who is from the beginning. I write to you, young men, because you have overcome the evil one. I write

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to you, little children, because you know the Father I have written to you, fathers, because you know him who is from the beginning. I have written to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God remains in you, and you have overcome the evil one." 1John 2:3-6, 13-14

They also see things the way God views them and judge righteously. Fathers can be said to be those who possess the mind of Christ and as such are spiritual men;

"But he who is spiritual discerns all things, and he himself is judged by no one. For who has known the mind of the Lord, that he should instruct him? But we have Christ's mind." 1 Corinthians 2:15-16

They can be said to be men who are no longer living for themselves. Thus, the world is crucified to them and vice versa;

"But far be it from me to boast, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world." Galatians 6:14

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Fathers are those who lay down even their souls for the brethren;

"Even so, affectionately longing for you, we were well pleased to impart to you, not the Good News of God only, but also our own souls, because you had become very dear to us." 1 Thessalonians 2:8

Last but not the least, they also bless those whom they preach to physically but not make gain out of them just like Paul did in his days;

"Behold, this is the third time I am ready to come to you, and I will not be a burden to you; for I seek not your possessions, but you. For the children ought not to save up for the parents, but the parents for the children. I will most gladly spend and be spent for your souls. If I love you more abundantly, am I loved the less? But be it so, I did not myself burden you. But, being crafty, I caught you with deception. Did I take advantage of you by anyone of them whom I have sent to you? I exhorted Titus, and I sent the brother with him. Did Titus take any advantage of you? Didn't we walk in the same spirit? Didn't we walk in the same steps? Again, do you think that we are excusing ourselves to you? In the sight of God we

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...speak in Christ. But all things, beloved, are for your edifying." 2 Corinthians 12:14-19

Thus they are bold enough to say;

*"Be imitators of me, even as I also am of Christ."
1 Corinthians 11:1*

You will realize, it is mainly Paul who uses the word (father) for himself as well as his missionary team. Those who call themselves fathers should carefully study the lives of such humble men, learn from Christ and these Apostles, and then shall they be qualified to be addressed as such. It does not matter the record and testimony of men, but God's is what matters. So let us not boast because men address us in some funny ways, but wait on the perfect Judge who will judge the evil motives and deeds of men, as revealed in 1 Corinthians 4:5.

Most of the modern day 'spiritual generals' never come close to being addressed as fathers. It is better to go the humble way to be addressed as a brother here on earth than to carry such big titles upon ourselves and to be non-entities in heaven. Don't love the praise of men as did the Scribes and Pharisees in the days of Jesus'

ministry;

"for they loved men's praise more than God's praise."
John 12:43

Remember our main text in Isaiah suggests, when women begin to lead then God's people are backslidden. We have already looked at the issue of children leading us and being overseers etc. I will endeavour to present truths which will show that when women begin to assume leadership or authority over men in the house of God then there is something wrong in the body of Christ.

Before I continue, let me say I believe very much in women being in ministry and also exercising authority over fellow women and children but not over men. Without any gender prejudice, I see this to be the sovereign order of God. It will be wrong for me to say women are not to be in ministry when God Himself has chosen to give them the Holy Spirit and His gifts. It is therefore the area of governing the church that women are not permitted to exercise authority over men. If even women are supposed to be under their husbands authority in the house (whether they are anointed or not), then how can they exercise authority in the house

of God?

"In like manner, wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; so that, even if any don't obey the Word, they may be won by the behavior of their wives without a word;" 1 Peter 3:1, (1 Corinthians 14:35)

Let me go on to God's sovereign order when it comes to governance among His people. Right from the Garden of Eden, God first of all created man after which He made woman out of him in Genesis 2:22-23. It was the man God vested authority in and thus was the one charged for the fallen state of us all;

"For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive." 1 Corinthians 15:22

When God wanted to redeem man from sin, He started His agenda of making covenants with our fathers (not our mother's) right from Abraham. Even to save the world, it was Noah who found favour in the sight of God as Genesis 6:8 reveals. Then when he wanted to create the twelve tribes of Israel (though Jacob had a daughter) He still chose only men.

When the Israelites were in captivity, God raised two

men(Moses and Aaron) to deliver and lead the people of Israel out of Egypt. When Moses was setting up the priesthood, no woman was incorporated into it though Miriam was a prophetess (notice she led the women to sing to glorify God).

When it came to the time for Moses to send spies into the promise land, he chose a man each from the twelve tribes of Israel. Why wasn't at least one woman chosen? I believe of course there were godly women amongst them. When God now wanted Moses to hand over the baton to someone to take the children of Israel into the promise land, He chose a man in the person of Joshua the son of Nun (Deuteronomy 31:14).

When Joshua also wanted to send spies into Jericho, he also chose men. Please bear in mind there was not a time in the history of Israel whereby women were elders.

After Joshua died, the people of Israel became increasingly rebellious against God's word and God began to release them into the hands of their enemies to be oppressed. Then God began to raise judges in Israel who were all men except Deborah, to deliver the people of Israel out of the hands of their captors. How

did a woman come into the scene? This is how it all happened;

"She sent and called Barak the son of Abinoam out of Kedesh Naphtali, and said to him, Hasn't Yahweh, the God of Israel, commanded, [saying], go and draw to Mount Tabor, and take with you ten thousand men of the children of Naphtali and of the children of Zebulun? I will draw to you, to the river Kishon, Sisera, the captain of Jabin's army, with his chariots and his multitude; and I will deliver him into your hand. Barak said to her, If you will go with me, then I will go; but if you will not go with me, I will not go. She said, I will surely go with you: notwithstanding, the journey that you take shall not be for your honor; for Yahweh will sell Sisera into the hand of a woman. Deborah arose, and went with Barak to Kedesh." Judges 4:6-9

The above scripture gives us an insight as to the nature of this prophetess (Deborah). She knew when it comes to leadership, it is men who were supposed to be at the helm of affairs. However, the men at the time refused the call to duty and thus Deborah had to lead them and become their judge. In the history of Israel, women

played some important roles by fulfilling their ministry as prophetess etc. an example of such a prophetess was Huldah, as 2Kings 22:14 and 2 Chronicles 34:22 reveals. When it comes to leadership, there is nowhere God ever appointed women to lead Israel except when men failed Him. It was always out of Israel's backslidden state and rebellion that a woman could assume the powers of a king in Israel as can be seen in 2 Kings 11:1-2, 20 when Athaliah usurped authority in Israel.

For God to bring about the redemption of man, He Himself came as a man in the person of Jesus. When He wanted the gospel to be preached, He chose twelve men to be the foundation of the church, with He Himself being the chief corner stone;

"Being built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the chief cornerstone;" Ephesians 2:20

Why on earth didn't Christ include at least a woman among them? This is not in any way to undermine the role women played in the ministry of Christ and are still playing now. What is evident to this point is, women generally were involved in ministry in one way or the

other, but did not exercise authority over men.

In the New Testament church, right from the day of Pentecost, the first leaders the church appointed to share food were all men;

"Therefore select from among you, brothers, seven men of good report, full of the Holy Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business."
Acts 6:3

At least when it comes to matters concerning food, women are good at it. The question however is, why didn't they at least include one woman? In picking some examples in the book of Acts and Romans, you will realize women were still not exercising authority over men;

"He began to speak boldly in the synagogue. But when Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him aside, and explained to him the way of God more accurately." *Acts 18:26*

"Greet Andronicus and Junias, my relatives and my fellow prisoners, who are notable among the apostles, who also were in Christ before me." *Romans 16:7*

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In the case of Junias (who some claim was a woman and an apostle) it is however ambiguous in the original Greek. The scripture above does not suggest Junias was a woman. Andronicus and Junias were Paul's fellow prisoners. When it comes to Priscilla, she was ministering alongside her husband (and surely she was under the authority of her husband).

Let us now go into the teachings of Paul when it comes to women exercising authority over men. Paul taught that a woman should not exercise authority over man;

*"But I don't permit a woman to teach, nor to exercise authority over a man, but to be in quietness."
1 Timothy 2:12*

In his letter to Timothy concerning those who were qualified to be ordained as bishops, elders and deacons, he always used masculine and not feminine gender;

"The overseer therefore must be without reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, sensible, modest, hospitable, good at teaching; . . ." 1 Timothy 3:2-12

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To Titus he again used masculine and not feminine;

"... If anyone is blameless, the husband of one wife, having children who believe, who are not accused of loose or unruly behavior... Titus 1:5-9

Normally some object to this position with the following scripture;

"The elder, to the chosen lady and her children, whom I love in truth; and not I only, but also all those who know the truth;" 2 John 1

This letter was from an elder to the elect lady and her children. Notice the lady was not an elder or deacon. In any way you can learn from Paul's letter to Titus, it is possible to have a church and certain positions could be vacant (until leaders are appointed appropriately in due season). There is no rush in the house of God;

"I left you in Crete for this reason, that you would set in order the things that were lacking, and appoint elders in every city, as I directed you;" Titus 1:5

So in the face of these scriptures, how come some women have even become General Overseers in the

house of God? Where in the old and New Testament do we find such a thing happening if not a symptom of a generation which is backslidden? The only reason why women will exercise authority over men is when men refuse the call to duty. If right now you are a woman and you are exercising authority over men (unless they have relinquished authority to you), I pray God will help you hand over to a competent man. It is possible for God to even bring a man from elsewhere to takeover if you sincerely want to hand over authority. However, as I stated earlier, women can exercise authority over their fellow women (just like Miriam) and over children but not over men. Any other way of governing the church of God is an act of rebellion against God's sovereign order and must be repented of immediately.

Another angle from which we can view 'women' leading the church is when men refuse to be men. A man is one simply because he is bold and is able to subdue things. A look at so many men in the church today does not really seem it is men leading us(as they possess the hearts of women). This is why most of them are chicken hearted and thus live a life of cowardice. It is mostly women who are always griped with fear at the least sense of danger. Isaiah therefore prophesied that the

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watchmen or elders of Israel were like dumb dogs who could not bark;

*"His watchmen are blind, they are all without knowledge; they are all mute dogs, they can't bark; dreaming, lying down, loving to slumber."
Isaiah 56:10*

Most modern day preachers no longer have the boldness required to preach the cross, which is an offence (KJV) to the people of the world;

"But I, brothers, if I still preach circumcision, why am I still persecuted? Then the stumbling block of the cross has been removed." Galatians 5:11

Therefore to be able to preach it, you need to be bold. The cross must speak in this hour. The Apostles taught men to die before they die. The church is to let the world know Christ died for sin, so they would die to sin and not die of sin. In the book of Acts when the disciples were threatened not to preach Christ, they went to God in prayer for Him to grant them boldness to preach the word;

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"Now, Lord, look at their threats, and grant to your servants to speak your word with all boldness,"
Acts 4:29

Paul also asked the believers to pray for him to enable him open his mouth and preach the Gospel with boldness of speech it deserves. To him, the gospel must be preached with boldness and not timidity;

"for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak."
Ephesians 6:20

From these scriptures at least we realise, the gospel cannot be preached by weaklings. Thus why God chose to put men at the front line just to save guard the truth. No wise parent will give something precious to an infant or a babe. He will give it to the strongest of his children. This is why whenever a father wanted to leave a legacy for generations to come, he would entrust his property into the hands of his first born male child. It is men (not women) who can save guard a legacy. Scriptures makes it clear, we are to earnestly contend for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints as Jude 3 reveals.

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If therefore we have men and not 'women' in authority, why then is true Christianity largely lost in our generation? When you make a comparison between the faith of our fathers and ours, you will understand there is a great gulf between us. These days we have men parading themselves as revivalist and so on. But a careful look at their life reveals, the world has rather consumed them. 'Self' is reigning in them and not Christ. They cannot boldly declare that the world is crucified to them and vice versa.

They continue to deceive babes by proclaiming revival meetings. These babes get there and the meeting is rather to gang up against Christ (so far as it is meant for physical or material things). That is not to say, asking for certain needs which are material in nature is abominable, but the making of those things our top priority is the issue at stake. Colossians 3:1-2 admonishes us to set our affections on things above and not on earthly things. If all our energy is spent praying for earthly things, then we become the enemies of the cross as in line with Philippians 3:18-19.

Now ask yourself, which of the men God used as an instrument to revive the church called himself a revivalist? They were simply powerful weapons in the

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hands of God to rescue souls who were bound in chains right in the pit of hell. The Holy Spirit is the revivalist and these men were just agents to deliver God's truth to a perverse generation. Please note, revival is not advertised but it does advertise itself. Any formula contrary to this is a false revival. However, God can inform us of a particular time He will revive His church. Nevertheless it is the will of the Lord for His church to enjoy the abundant flow of the Holy Spirit at all times. The following scripture gives us the testimony of Jesus concerning John the Baptist;

"He was the burning and shining lamp, and you were willing to rejoice for a while in his light." John 5:35

To detect the motivation for the behaviour many people are exhibiting these days (and for a better conviction of what is being revealed now), just go back into history and study revivals and compare it with what we have these days. It will reveal, most preachers are not really who they claim to be, for they do not know what revival is. True revival liberates people from the bondage of sin and not financial bondages which those who serve their belly organize these days. Can you be in a revival meeting and still do fund raising under such an

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atmosphere? There is really a need for deep rooted repentance in our generation. If not, how can we call businessmen revivalist? The men God used in revivals died without amassing earthly possessions. Since these so called revival meetings are not from God, they have to kindle their own fire;

"Behold, all you who kindle a fire, who gird yourselves about with firebrands; walk you in the flame of your fire, and among the brands that you have kindled. This shall you have of my hand; you shall lie down in sorrow." Isaiah 50:11

Men these days kindle their own fire by way of first of all drumming and dancing vigorously, after which there is a slow way of singing (normally termed as worship) before the revivalist comes to preach with the enticing words of human wisdom. Unlike these self-appointed revivalists, Paul used great plainness of speech and the words which the Holy Spirit taught;

"Which things also we speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches, but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual things." 1 Corinthians 2:13

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If you want to know most of the revivals are fake, immediately the meeting is in progress and there is power interruption (common in Africa) the spirit of such revival goes along with it. These places can be best described as entertainment centres as people are not really in to seek the great physician who is able to deliver them from the bondage of sin. Our generation indeed needs serious spiritual 'surgery' and not smooth talk.

At such revival meetings the word of God is not sent forth to rebuke, reprove and instruct congregants in the way of righteousness (the primary reason God gave us the scriptures as 2 Timothy 3:16-17 attests).

Is this not the generation which rather needs the rebuke, correction and instruction in righteousness, seeing sin abounds everywhere? Surely the word of God has come to pass as in line with Matthew 24:12, for the love of many men have grown cold. If not, why will preachers be still entertaining their congregation when most of these professing believers are on the broad way to hell? These men's faith is dead and does not constitute the faith of the son of God as our fathers knew. The professing believer and preacher of our

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times have misplaced their priorities and consequently lost eternity's view. Instead of spiritual things or the kingdom of heaven being our main focus as did the early disciples, our generation is rather pleased to dwell on this earth and to amass its goods. This makes them to continuously fix their eyes on things on earth and not on the things above where Christ is seated;

"If then you were raised together with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated on the right hand of God. Set your mind on the things that are above, not on the things that are on the earth."

Colossians 3:1-2

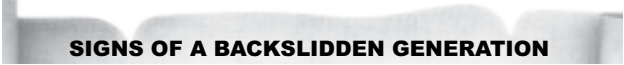
How can we then grow in the Lord when every thought of ours is earthly? Majority of professing believers are cut off from the Lord and they are not even aware of it. According to the teachings of Christ you either grow or you are cut off from the vine;

"I am the true vine, and my Father is the farmer. Every branch in me that doesn't bear fruit, he takes away. Every branch that bears fruit, he prunes, that it may bear more fruit. You are already pruned clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. Remain in me, and I in you. As the branch can't bear

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fruit by itself, unless it remains in the vine, so neither can you, unless you remain in me. I am the vine. You are the branches. He who remains in me, and I in him, the same bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing. If a man doesn't remain in me, he is thrown out as a branch, and is withered; and they gather them, throw them into the fire, and they are burned." John 15:1-6

Now with this scripture don't you think a lot of professing believers and preachers are even cut off from God? According to the scripture above, those who bear fruit are pruned in order for them to bear much fruit, Those who don't are however cut off. To Christ, bearing fruit is not the issue, but bearing much of it really glorifies God and proves we are His disciples indeed. The path to spiritual advancement is sacrifice. As we bear fruit He continues to cause us to release certain aspects of our lives or desires to Him. For us to have more of God, it should be less of us until self disappears. Why is it then, some people do not increase their level of sacrifice to God as a proof of spiritual growth, but rather amass wealth to themselves?



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It is clear, they are rather more inclined to the world than to God. This is why our fathers taught that you cannot be a true disciple of Jesus Christ and amass this world's goods. Jesus Himself said we should store our treasures in heaven and not on earth as in line with Matthew 6:20.

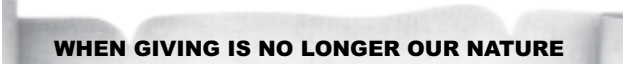
So, according to His teachings, spiritual stagnancy (not to even talk of retrogression) is a sin. If a man therefore really claims to be advancing in the spirit, then it means he is sacrificing more and more for Jesus' sake. By this do some believers seem to be sacrificing more and more for the sake of Christ? This tells us, most men are cut off from God in our generation and they are not even aware of it. St. Augustine in *The Confessions 1*, makes a profound statement to this effect "He loves Thee too little who loves anything together with Thee which he loves not for Thy sake". The Lord is indeed calling this backslidden generation to repent and He will restore us.

**WHEN GIVING IS NO
LONGER OUR NATURE**

Love is the very foundation upon which the Christian faith is built. When man sinned against God and fell short of His glory, he needed to be restored by redemption from sin. For this reason God had to give His only begotten son in due time for our sin according to John 3:16. It is interesting to note, love is one of the definitions of God. According to 1 John 4:16, God is love and automatically this nature of His causes Him to give. Scripture therefore makes us to understand, if God did not withhold His only son from us, then He is ever prepared to give us all that will be of benefit to us;

"He who didn't spare his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how would he not also with him freely give us all things?" Romans 8:32

No wonder God could call Abraham His friend. Abraham was able to offer his only son to God when He requested Isaac from him. In effect God is pleased with those who are prepared to give. The principle which



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works in this world is the principle of giving and receiving (input and output). However, scriptures make us to know, it is more blessed to give than to receive (Acts 20:35). So when God gave His only son in the person of Jesus Christ, He (the son) also gave His life for all of us. Christ understood the value of giving and that is why He made us to know, if a grain of wheat does not fall down and die, it will abide alone. The interesting aspect of giving is, whatever is given is smaller as compared to what is received.

In the New Testament, more souls were won simply because of the love the believers showed towards one another. This love was expressed in fellowship and in giving. The act of giving amazed the people around to the extent, they had no option than to join the body of Christ. The outcome of giving was therefore evident in Acts 2:44-47.

The early church was able to give simply because they learned the nature of God. Scriptures make us know that, we are created in the image of God. If God is love, then it stands to reason, the nature of love is been imputed into the believer. This is the reason why those who had this imputed nature in the early church did not

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find it a problem to part with their possessions. Love was a fundamental teaching in the early church. Showing of love was taught to be automatic in the life of a believer;

"But concerning brotherly love, you have no need that one write to you. For you yourselves are taught by God to love one another," 1 Thessalonians 4:9

Why then is it so difficult for so many in our generation to manifest love by giving unconditionally? It is either they are backslidden or not Christians in the first place. I am not suggesting we do not have to even teach on giving (since it is supposed to be automatic in the disciple) but, it should be a foundation upon which one should grow in grace. There was a particular group of believers who Paul commended for their giving habit. It is interesting to note why they were able to give even in their poverty. This group was the disciples in Macedonia. They first of all gave themselves to God and giving was not difficult for them;

"This was not as we had hoped, but first they gave their own selves to the Lord, and to us through the will of God." 2 Corinthians 8:5

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In essence when we first of all dedicate our whole life to Christ then there is nothing we cannot part away with for the sake of Christ. The reason why many cannot manifest giving (progressively) is because they have not fully dedicated their lives to Christ. God has designed that we learn from the example of Christ and to be like Him. A scripture most money lovers use in Christendom is this;

"For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that you through his poverty might become rich." 2 Corinthians 8:9

Contrary to the meaning these money lovers assign to the above scripture, Paul was rather teaching us to give. We are to learn from Christ that though He was rich, He became poor in order for us to gain. Paul was in effect teaching the disciples in Corinth to emulate the example of Christ to also part away with their material possessions for the benefit of the saints in Jerusalem. To know why Paul had to teach this church the importance of laying their lives for others, it is important for us to remember that, it was largely a backslidden one. As for Paul and his missionary team they gave out

their material possessions, thus offering their souls as 1 Thessalonians 2:8 depicts.

Christ, who is our perfect example, also taught a lot about the necessity of giving. He taught that the children of the world are wiser in their own generation than the children of God. The children of this world with their evil intentions learn to give, knowing one day when they are in need, their beneficiary would not turn them down;

"He also said to his disciples, "There was a certain rich man who had a manager. An accusation was made to him that this man was wasting his possessions. . . His lord commended the dishonest manager because he had done wisely, for the children of this world are, in their own generation, wiser than the children of the light. I tell you, make for yourselves friends by means of unrighteous mammon, so that when you fail, they may receive you into the eternal tents. He who is faithful in a very little is faithful also in much. He who is dishonest in a very little is also dishonest in much. If therefore you have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches?" Luke 16:1-11

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From the scripture above we learn the reason why so many professing believers these days are not entrusted with the true riches of God (deeper knowledge of Christ) is simply because they are not able to part with material things for the benefit of others (for the sake of Christ). I hereby reiterate the fact that the path way to spiritual progress is sacrifice. Christ wanted to teach His disciples this most important truth and thus why when He called His disciples He always required they leave everything they had in order to follow (know) Him. In His teachings, He made it clear, no one can serve two masters. You either love God and hate money (material things) or vice versa;

"No servant can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to one, and despise the other. You aren't able to serve God and mammon" Luke 16:13

This accounts for the reason why God does not want us to hoard material things. When they come to us, God expects us to give them out for the benefit of others. If this is not done, it will compete for the love of God in our lives. However, God does not want to share us with anything. It is therefore impossible for one to amass

this world's goods and still claim to be attached to God. The principle is, you are either rich toward God and poor in this world's goods (given to a life of liberal giving) or you are rich in this world's goods and poor towards God;

"He spoke a parable to them, saying, "The ground of a certain rich man brought forth abundantly. . . He said, 'This is what I will do. I will pull down my barns, and build bigger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. I will tell my soul, "Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years. Take your ease, eat, drink, be merry. . . So is he who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God." Luke 12:16-21

You will understand, Christ in His teachings never had anything good to say concerning the rich of this world, but rather proclaimed woe unto them. His disciples did not also have anything good to say unto the rich of this world just like their master. We see this to be consistent in the teachings of the apostles especially James;

"But let the brother in humble circumstances glory in his high position; and the rich, in that he is made

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humble, because like the flower in the grass, he will pass away. For the sun arises with the scorching wind, and withers the grass, and the flower in it falls, and the beauty of its appearance perishes. So also will the rich man fade away in his pursuits... My brothers, don't hold the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ of glory with partiality... Listen, my beloved brothers. Didn't God choose those who are poor in this world to be rich in faith, and heirs of the Kingdom which he promised to those who love him? ... "James 1:9-11, 2:1-6,

Christ for that matter always demanded His disciples reject a life of unreasonable luxury in order to gain Him. Paul also knew this all important truth and thus why he had to suffer the loss of all things in order to gain the knowledge of Christ;

"Yes most certainly, and I count all things to be loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus, my Lord, for whom I suffered the loss of all things, and count them nothing but refuse, that I may gain Christ" Philippians 3:8

When we look at the lives of the Apostles, we learn they

did not amass wealth to themselves. This accounts for the reason why they were rich toward God. The reason many are spiritually impoverished in our days is simply because they are students and servants of Mammon. Most people's lives seem to contradict the clear teachings of Christ in His sermon on the mount.

A. W. Tozer in his *Pursuit of God* was right in saying, "In the world of men we find nothing approaching the virtues of which Jesus spoke in the opening words of the famous Sermon on the Mount. Instead of poverty of spirit we find the rankest kind of pride; instead of mourners we find pleasure seekers; instead of meekness, arrogance; instead of hunger after righteousness we hear men saying, "I am rich and increased with goods and have need of nothing"; instead of mercy we find cruelty; instead of purity of heart, corrupt imaginings; instead of peacemakers we find men quarrelsome and resentful; instead of rejoicing in mistreatment we find them fighting back with every weapon at their command".

He continues to reveal that, all our heartaches and a great many of our physical ills spring directly out of our sins. Pride, arrogance, resentfulness, evil imaginings,

malice, greed: these are the sources of more human pain than all the diseases that ever afflicted mortal flesh. Even in the parable of Jesus concerning the sower, He makes us to understand that, the reason some professing believers are unfruitful is because they care so much about the world and are deceived by riches;

"And the cares of this age, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful." Mark 4:19

Most of the Jews (especially their Scribes, Pharisees and the Sadducees) were not able to identify the messiah in His first coming. The reason was, they were not part of the sheepfold. Christ said He knows His sheep and His sheep hears His voice as in line with John 10:14, 27. From this scripture we understand that the sheep automatically is able to identify his shepherd (who is Christ). The question we ask ourselves is, how do we identify Christ in our days? According to scriptures, Christ lives in the hearts of His true disciples as stated in Colossians 1:27. Let us go on further to learn about the nature of the sheep;

"Before him all the nations will be gathered, and he will separate them one from another, as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then the King will tell those on his right hand, 'Come, blessed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry, and you gave me food to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave me drink; I was a stranger, and you took me in; naked, and you clothed me; I was sick, and you visited me; I was in prison, and you came to me. Then the righteous will answer him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry, and feed you; or thirsty, and give you a drink? When did we see you as a stranger, and take you in; or naked, and clothe you? When did we see you sick, or in prison, and come to you?' The King will answer them, 'Most certainly I tell you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me. Then he will say also to those on the left hand, 'Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire which is prepared for the devil and his angels, for I was hungry, and you didn't give me food to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave me no drink; I was a stranger, and you didn't take me in; naked, and you didn't clothe me; sick, and in prison, and you didn't visit me. Then

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they will also answer, saying, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry, or thirsty, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and didn't help you? Then he will answer them, saying, 'Most certainly I tell you, inasmuch as you didn't do it to one of the least of these, you didn't do it to me. These will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.'"
Matthew 25:32-46

Brethren, we realize from the above scripture that Christ is first and foremost synonymous with the poor and destitute. He is not identified with the rich (not that he hates them), but through His teachings they are not supposed to amass wealth on this earth. Those He chooses to dwell in are those who live selfless lives. Remember in His teachings, we are to do good to those who cannot pay us back. If we do good to only those whom we deem will be able to pay us back in one way or the other, then we have evil intentions;

"If you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. If you lend to those from whom you hope to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, to receive back as much." Luke 6:33-34

The above scripture proves why the sheep did good to the poor and destitute, since they lived in obedience to the commands (teachings) of Christ. The goats however were an accursed group of people. I presume they, with their evil intentions did not do good to the poor and destitute simply because they were not in a position to pay them back. They rather ministered (I believe) to those they feel could repay them. If we therefore give with the intension of getting back what we gave out to our beneficiaries one day, then we are behaving like sinners.

These days you will recognize that many people do good to only those they know will be in a position to help them one day when they are in need. This is a sign of faithlessness and scripture tells us, without faith it is impossible to please God. We are called to give liberally hoping for nothing in return.

It is the power of God made available in the person of the Holy Spirit which makes men give willingly. Scripture makes us know, the people of God shall be willing in the days of the power of God;

"Your people offer themselves willingly in the day of your power, in holy array. Out of the womb of the

morning, you have the dew of your youth."
Psalms 110:3

As the point was made earlier that, the early church from Acts chapters 2 to 6 was a giving church, this was made possible because of the power and the great grace which was upon them as Acts 4:33-35 reveals.

The situation was not different even in the days of Moses. After God had brought the Israelites from Egypt into the wilderness with His great power, He asked Moses to take an offering from the people for the work of the tabernacle. We learned the people gave to the point that Moses had to instruct them to stop giving as evident in the Scripture below;

"They spoke to Moses, saying, "The people bring much more than enough for the service of the work which Yahweh commanded to make. Moses gave commandment, and they caused it to be proclaimed throughout the camp, saying, "Let neither man nor woman make anything else for the offering for the sanctuary." So the people were restrained from bringing. For the stuff they had was sufficient for all the work to make it, and too much."
Exodus 36:5-7

Those were indeed the days of God's power. Can it be said of today's professing believers that they are willing to give out their possessions without being cajoled to do so? A look around shows many people are always coerced in one way or the other before they will give. Even when they do so, they are always expecting the benefits right on this earth. Why don't they expect to get their reward in heaven? It is simply because they are earthly minded (a motivation which is wrong). Christ however taught, when we do good to others we will also reap the reward on this earth. For the true disciple of Christ, whether he gets the benefit on earth or not he will give for giving sake and for the sake of Christ.

I can boldly say, God is ashamed to be called the God of so many professing believers. This is because they are earthly minded and not heavenly bound. For if they are heavenly bound they will not amass wealth to themselves but rather give to others who are in need.

I believe the confessions of Minucius Felix, in *Octavius* 36.37, should give us some more illumination as to how true Christianity looks like. In it he says "That we for the most part must be considered poor is no disgrace to us but an honor. A life of luxury weakens the spirit. Frugality makes it strong. And yet, how can anyone be

considered poor who does not feel any want, who does not covet what belongs to others, who is rich in God's eyes? Much more should he be considered poor who always craves for more while he already has much. Let me tell you what I think. No one can be as poor as he was at birth. The birds live without any inheritance, and cattle find their fodder each day. Yet these creatures are on the earth for our sake. We possess all of them if we do not covet them. Just as a man traveling on the road is the better off the lighter his bundle, so too, he who makes himself light by poverty, who does not need to pant under the burden of wealth, is happiest on his journey through life. If we regarded wealth as useful we would ask God for it. He surely could give us a share of it, for everything belongs to him, but we would rather despise wealth than have it in our hands". The people of faith are always heavenly bound and God is not always ashamed to be called their God;

"But now they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed of them, to be called their God, for he has prepared a city for them." Hebrews 11:16

THE FEAR OF GOD

In these dark times, one of the manifestations of the spirit which is greatly needed is the fear of God. Due to the necessity of this function of the Spirit of God (in aiding one to live a pure life), God had to place major emphasis on it as it related to the life of Christ;

"His delight will be in the fear of Yahweh. He will not judge by the sight of his eyes, neither decide by the hearing of his ears;" Isaiah 11:3

The fear of the Lord was the pivot of the manifestation of Christ. With the fear of God, Christ was qualified to begin the journey into possessing the wisdom of God. For scripture makes us to understand;

"The child was growing, and was becoming strong in spirit, being filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was upon him." Luke 2:40

No wonder it is said, Christ grew in wisdom, stature and in favour with both man and God. You and I can

therefore attest to the fact that the genesis of His wisdom was the fear of God. Many these days tend to concentrate more on praying for the favour of God. They however do not take into consideration the need for the fear of God which will automatically qualify them for it. When a man lacks wisdom, it is a clear manifestation of the absence of the fear of the Lord in his life;

"The fear of Yahweh is the beginning of wisdom. The knowledge of the Holy One is understanding."
Proverbs 9:10

When we ask for wisdom from above, God will first of all teach us to fear Him (in order for wisdom to be a consequence). There is no doubt, it was the fear of God in Christ's life which made Him who He was. Scriptures have defined for us what the fear of God really is;

"The fear of Yahweh is to hate evil. I hate pride, arrogance, the evil way, and the perverse mouth."
Proverbs 8:13

Since Christ departed from iniquity (as there was no sin found in Him), He was more than qualified to save us from our sins. For how can He take away our sins when

He Himself has sin? This is therefore the reason why God exalted Him and anointed Him with the oil of gladness above His fellows;

"You have loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness above your fellows." "Hebrews 1:9

It is possible that, from His infancy He clearly distinguished Himself as one who greatly eschewed evil since He feared God. Because of this fear, God always heard Him when He prayed (John 11:41-42). There is no way a man can be heard by God in prayers when he does not fear God. The reason being, if a man does not fear God it is certain he will sin against Him. If there is even one sin in a man's heart and is not repented of, then God will not hear him;

"If I cherished sin in my heart, the Lord wouldn't have listened." Psalm 66:18

It is not a surprise, a lot of prayers are made these days almost everywhere you go, but there is little impact being made. The reason is, most believers and even prayer 'warriors' do not simply fear the Lord. According to scripture, Joseph feared God in his days. This young

man had to flee when his master's wife wanted to sleep with him (Genesis 39:9, 11-12).

Joseph viewed sleeping with the woman to be a wicked act against God. Many youths today would have viewed it as an opportunity to satisfy their sexual desire. These young men are always deceived by the devil into believing, after all they can ask for forgiveness from God. They normally cite the following scripture in defense of their sinful acts;

"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous to forgive us the sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." 1 John 1:9

They however forget, if one is born of God he or she does not continue to sin;

"You know that he was revealed to take away our sins, and in him is no sin. Whoever remains in him doesn't sin. Whoever sins hasn't seen him, neither knows him. Little children, let no one lead you astray. He who does righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous. He who sins is of the devil, for the devil has been sinning from the beginning. To this end the Son of God was revealed, that he might destroy the works of

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the devil. Whoever is born of God doesn't commit sin, because his seed remains in him; and he can't sin, because he is born of God." 1 John 3:5-9

Deliberately sinning against God is a very wicked act in the realm of the Spirit as it is just like taking Jesus back to the cross and nailing Him afresh (thus living Him to public ridicule). Just as Joseph in his days saw sinning against God to be a wicked act and thus fled the scene of evil, let us also heed the advice of Paul in the following scripture;

"Flee sexual immorality! "Every sin that a man does is outside the body," but he who commits sexual immorality sins against his own body." 1 Corinthians 6:18

Job, one of the perfect examples of men who feared God in the Scriptures did not only depart from iniquity, but always prayed for forgiveness for his children (peradventure they might have sinned against God in their hearts);

"... For Job said, "It may be that my sons have sinned, and renounced God in their hearts." Thus did Job continually." Job 1:5



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If Job was interceding for his children not for sins he knows they had committed but for sins he anticipates they might have committed, what does it tell us of the man? I am sure in his own life he never (deliberately) sinned against God and thus feared God;

"There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job. That man was blameless and upright, and one who feared God, and turned away from evil." Job 1:1

Just like Job who prayed for his children thinking they might have sinned against God, the psalmist could not be left out as he prayed that God forgives him of hidden sin;

"Who can discern his errors? Forgive me from hidden errors. Keep back your servant also from presumptuous sins. Let them not have dominion over me. Then I will be upright. I will be blameless and innocent of great transgression." Psalm 19:12-13

A look around these days reveals the lack of the fear of God in many lives. Even when one sins and he is rebuked, he takes offence (not to even talk of asking for forgiveness when the Holy Spirit convicts him or her). If

such people ignore the promptings of the Holy Spirit and the rebuke of other believers, then how can they even pray that God forgives them of hidden sins? The truth is, many are rebellious and thus lack the fear of God. It will interest you to note, these rebellious ones are the same who pray against witches and wizards (especially in the African setting) forgetting, one can only deal with the forces of darkness when his or her obedience is complete;

*"and being in readiness to avenge all disobedience,
when your obedience will be made full."
2 Corinthians 10:6*

The other reason which accounts for the spiritual poverty of many professing believers in this end-time is their lack of the fear of God. God only reveals His secrets and plans to men who fear Him;

*"The secret of the LORD is with them that fear him;
and he will shew them his covenant."
Psalm 25:14 KJV*

In effect, it is not amazing, all men who feared God were carriers of the mysteries of God. When I talk of mysteries, I am not talking of doctrines taught by devils

which only excites human intellect (and lacks the potency of changing the life of one from disobedience to total obedience). The lack of sound doctrine in the church today is largely attributed to the lack of the fear of God. If men really fear God, then they will not use Christ as a money making tool, but project Him as their focus of love. Those who truly loved and feared God like Christ, Joseph, Job, Daniel and David were all men who possessed the deep mysteries of God. Just as I have already established, Joseph was a youth who feared God and thus, had to flee the scene of sin. Paul also advised Timothy to flee youthful lust (2Timothy 2:22).

It is interesting to note, he did not instruct him to rebuke the lust, but to flee from it. Youths normally have the tendency to be trapped by certain lusts such as money, amusements, sexual immorality and the like. However, a godly youth is supposed to flee from them and not to entertain such thoughts or even deeds. Solomon said;

"Fools make a mock at sin: but among the righteous there is favour." Proverbs 14:9 KJV

You do not stand by the edge of a pit and still deceive yourself that you are not likely to fall into it. Surely the

wise will bear me witness that your chances of falling inside the pit are very high. As such, the best option is to withdraw yourself far away from it as possible (just as Paul advised us to flee youthful lusts). Take no chances but rather flee every appearance of evil. After fleeing, we have to in turn pursue the following;

*"...But pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart."
2 Timothy 2:22*

These days, people feel free to lie and behave anyhow in the presence of God simply because there is no fear of God in their lives. Do you think if there is the fear of God in many hearts they can feel free to pay tithe on cocaine proceeds, give offering from bribes and fraudulent deals? In reflection, let us look at an interesting development in the book of Acts involving a man and his wife;

"But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira, his wife, sold a possession, and kept back part of the price, his wife also being aware of it, and brought a certain part, and laid it at the apostles' feet...Ananias, hearing these words, fell down and died. Great fear came on all who heard these

things...About three hours later, his wife, not knowing what had happened, came in... But Peter asked her, "How is it that you have agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord? Behold, the feet of those who have buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out." She fell down immediately at his feet, and died. The young men came in and found her dead, and they carried her out and buried her by her husband. Great fear came on the whole assembly, and on all who heard these things." Acts 5:1-2,5,7,9-11

If the judgment of God visited this couple because they lied against the Holy Spirit, why is it that so many do not receive such judgment from the Lord these days (when they misbehave in the presence of the Lord)? Are we not all operating under the dispensation of grace? Could it be, the Lord is not actually reigning in many assemblies these days? Let me remind us, judgment is beginning in the house of God (1 Peter 4:17).

If we want God to be present in our meetings then we should be truthful and also expect disastrous eventuality should anyone misbehave in His presence. Why not cry for the presence of God back into so many assemblies in order for men to learn the fear of the Lord

just like the account in Acts? There is no difference these days between a gathering at discotheques and that of professing believers. Why should someone who claims to be a believer feel comfortable to partake in unwholesome conversations or even feel free to continually sit with sinners (if not to preach to them). Scriptures make us to understand, the blessed of the Lord depart from evil men and shares nothing in common with them.

A lot of 'Christian' politicians tell a lot of lies in order to come into power. After they have been given the mandate, they fail to deliver their promises and still continue in their lies just to cover up their failures. To such professing believers the Lord is commanding them to repent.

In education, a lot of professing Christian heads are only interested in the money they make but not the quality of teaching the school's pupils receive. They sometimes even pay their teachers poorly such that they in turn (the teachers) also find ways and means of extracting money from the students by organizing extra tuition for the students whereas topics could have been covered within the normal school hours. Heads of some educational institutions cunningly use most of the

money received to expand their facilities in a bid to evade tax (the motivation of our heart is what we should critically look at and give account of). The scriptures below really go to such people;

"Woe to those who join house to house, who lay field to field, until there is no room, and you are made to dwell alone in the midst of the land" Isaiah 5:8

*"Come now, you rich, weep and howl for your miseries that are coming on you. Your riches are corrupted and your garments are moth-eaten. Your gold and your silver are corroded, and their corrosion will be for a testimony against you, and will eat your flesh like fire. You have laid up your treasure in the last days. Behold, the wages of the laborers who mowed your fields, which you have kept back by fraud, cry out, and the cries of those who reaped have entered into the ears of the Lord of Armies."
James 5:1-4*

Some professing Christian teachers also pretend to be teaching seriously immediately they sense the presence of school authorities. Others will also come late, but in the log book sign that they came early. All such people, from the head to the teachers need to

repent before it is too late.

These days everything has been politicized so it is quite difficult to get contracts as a believer, unless you are affiliated to the political party in power or a member of an occult group (nevertheless, God is able to intervene to get His children contracts). All things being equal, it is relatively difficult for the true Christian businessman who desires to live godly in Christ Jesus to get one (contract) these days;

"Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution." 2 Timothy 3:12

To get a contract these days you either need to lie or even bribe those in charge of issuing contracts in order to get one. For a true believer it will take time before you can get a contract. If you are a professing believer and you always lie or bribe your way through just to get a contract, then you are following the bad example of Esau;

"Jacob gave Esau bread and stew of lentils. He ate and drank, rose up, and went his way. So Esau despised his birthright." Genesis 25:34

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"lest there be any sexually immoral person, or profane person, like Esau, who sold his birthright for one meal." Hebrews 12:16

Some of these contractors feel very free to still come and give testimonies in church after lying and giving bribes in order to gain contracts. To all such professors the Lord is commanding you to repent from such deceit. Another group of sinning contractors are those who do shoddy works by employing only few funds into the project in order for them to keep the rest of the money. Others also inflate the prices of building materials just because of the love of money. They all need to repent as time is running out.

These days a lot of professing Christian entrepreneurs pay their workers meager salary and still feel comfortable to give 'fat' tithes, offerings and donations simply because there is no fear of God in their lives. Some in paying their workers reduce the gross of the salary and increase the allowances in order to avoid the payment of huge taxes. This is selfishness since money from taxes will be used for the development of the nation in general. If you are a Christian entrepreneur and you are engaged in these practices,

kindly repent of such behavior as it would stand against you on the Day of Judgment.

There are also civil servants who in the name of poor salaries engage in all manner of corrupt practices. Let us remember, corruption (which comes in many forms) was one of the reasons why God brought down His wrath upon man in the days of Noah (Genesis 6:11-12).

Other Christian businessmen and businesswomen these days exploit other people including their own brothers they fellowship with. In their bid to make quick money, they sell their wares at exorbitant prices. The women also use unjust weights in the markets (especially in Africa). This is something God was strongly against in the land of Israel during the days of Amos the prophet;

"Saying, 'When will the new moon be gone, that we may sell grain? And the Sabbath, that we may market wheat, making the ephah small, and the shekel large, and dealing falsely with balances of deceit; that we may buy the poor for silver, and the needy for a pair of shoes, and sell the sweepings with the wheat?' Yahweh has sworn by the pride of Jacob,

"Surely I will never forget any of their works.' "
Amos 8:5-7

John the Baptist, who was the forerunner of our Lord Jesus Christ called the people of Israel to repent of such corrupt practices. He addressed the issue of selfishness, oppression of the defenseless and bribery and corruption which also plaques our societies these days. It is therefore a matter of urgency to call all those who find themselves culpable to any of the above named sins to repent from their evil ways in the name of Jesus.

So many professing believers these days do not see anything wrong with certain sins they commit since they do not fear God. Of note are pornography, idolatry, homosexuality, lesbianism, masturbation etc.

Why on earth should we get to the point where even pastors will prescribe pornographic materials for their members to boost their marriage and sexual life? I presume they are oblivious of the fact that those who act such movies are agents from the pit of hell. If professing believers buy these materials, are they not supporting the kingdom of darkness indirectly and as such are partakers of their sin? If therefore one gets

addicted to pornography then the fellow is likely to go to hell if he does not repent;

"who, knowing the ordinance of God, that those who practice such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but also approve of those who practice them." Romans 1:32

Spiritual productive hours of many believers are spent on watching operas and movies these days. How on earth can one feel comfortable to watch movies and the likes for hours but cannot spend two to three hours in Bible studies and prayer. If you can only devote much time for your television set and cannot do the same when it comes to the things of God, then you are an idolater. One may say, 'I am gathering some wisdom from it' but may I ask, have we been able to fully exhaust all the wisdom made available to us in the Scriptures? Come on, let us grab our Bibles and fall in love with Christ. Let us not give ourselves excuses but rather repent of such ways if we are engaged in them.

There are also some homosexuals and lesbians who deceive themselves, they are in for their mutual good. No matter the reason for one engaging in such a union, Bible calls it sexual perversion or uncleanness. This is

the sin which brought the wrath of God upon Sodom and Gomorrah;

"Yahweh said, "Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grievous," Genesis 18:20

"But before they lay down, the men of the city, the men of Sodom, surrounded the house, both young and old, all the people from every quarter. They called to Lot, and said to him, "Where are the men who came in to you this night? Bring them out to us, that we may have sex with them." Genesis 19:4

God in His original plan designed that man should be married to a woman and not his fellow man. In the same way woman is supposed to be married to a man and not her fellow woman. Why deceive ourselves when the only God approved way to meet our sexual needs is by the opposite sex. Any formula apart from man to woman is sexual perversion no matter how one chooses to call it. Brethren, let us arise and fight this menace, calling those who are involved to repent.

Another group of sexual perverts are men and women who masturbate. They are in the same category as

homosexuals and lesbians whether they are aware of it or not. So far as they decide to meet their sexual needs outside the formula of God (as in man to woman under wedlock), they are practicing sexual perversion.

Because of the promises the Lord has for us, we are therefore supposed to live in holiness by first of all serving God with godly reverence and fear;

"Therefore, receiving a Kingdom that can't be shaken, let us have grace, through which we serve God acceptably, with reverence and awe, for our God is a consuming fire." Hebrews 12:28

"Having therefore these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." 2 Corinthians 7:1

Since wisdom and knowledge shall be the stability of our times (and wisdom has its genesis in the fear of God), then let us withdraw ourselves from anything which has the potential of taking us to hell. In the end, it is those who fear the name of the Lord whose names will be written in the book of remembrance;



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*"Then those who feared Yahweh spoke one with another; and Yahweh listened, and heard, and a book of memory was written before him, for those who feared Yahweh, and who honored his name."
Malachi 3:16*

**AWAKE TO
RIGHTEOUSNESS**

Spiritual slumber and sleep is very dangerous in the life of a professing Christian to the extent, Christ cautioned us to watch and pray;

"But of that day or that hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. Watch, keep alert, and pray; for you don't know when the time is. Mark 13:32-33

Christ knew, there was the tendency for His disciples to be caught off guard and thus slumber. There is no way we can be ready for the second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ if we are not watching and discerning the times. The sons of Issachar in scripture knew what the children of Israel ought to do in their generation simply because they had understanding of the times. There is no discernment if the children of God slumber or sleep.

There was a time in the life of the Israelites when God had to reveal to the prophet Isaiah that their watchmen had slumbered;

AWAKE TO RIGHTEOUSNESS

*"His watchmen are blind, they are all without knowledge; they are all mute dogs, they can't bark; dreaming, lying down, loving to slumber."
Isaiah 56:10*

In the face of spiritual slumber and sleep, I endeavor to bring out certain scriptural truths as it relates to our generation to call the church to awake out of slumber.

We have come to a point in time where what is supposed to be the norm is rather an exception when it comes to Christian living. Falsehood has been enthroned to the extent, what is not even close to Christianity has been branded as one. Those who according to spiritual standards never qualify to be leaders are busy leading God's people. How can a blind man lead his fellow blind man and both will not fall into a ditch?

There came a point in time when Paul had to call the church in Corinth to awake to righteousness and to depart from iniquity since some who professed to know God did not truly know Him;

"Awake to righteousness, and sin not; for some have not the knowledge of God: I speak this to your shame." 1 Corinthians 15:34 KJV

If men claim to know God then 1 John 2:3-6 will be their canon. A look around reveals the spiritual poverty and slumber of many professing believers. Those who claim to be bishops do not come close to be addressed as such. Their very lives directly contravene the qualities of a bishop as enshrined in the scriptures. According to Paul's letter to Titus, we know a bishop is not supposed to be greedy for money or to be covetous;

"For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God; not selfwilled, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre; But a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers."
Titus 1:7-9 KJV

From the above scripture, most bishops in our time do not match up to it at all. Their lives contradict it as they are greedy and covetous, as revealed in even their doctrine of greed. They are because, there is no element of sacrifice in their lives. They are always craving for more of this world's goods. Even before some will counsel their members, they have to charge

them a fee. Isaiah prophesied against those who did not want to live sacrificially, but always spread their tentacles by the spirit of greed and covetousness;

"Yes, the dogs are greedy, they can never have enough; and these are shepherds who can't understand: they have all turned to their own way, each one to his gain, from every quarter. Come you, [say they], I will get wine, and we will fill ourselves with strong drink; and tomorrow shall be as this day, [a day] great beyond measure." Isaiah 56:11-12

In the face of all these happenings in the house of God, isn't there a cause for us to arise and 'whip' these 'businessmen' turned preachers out from the congregation of God? These have made the word of God a money making tool (1 Timothy 6:5), rather than an instrument in instructing many in the way of righteousness as depicted in 2 Timothy 3:16-17.

Primarily, the word of God is meant to help us live lives which conform to Christ in the midst of an evil generation. If our savior was able to live a spotless life in this world then it's also possible we can also live in it without spot and blameless. Remember He is coming for a church without spot (KJV);

"But, according to his promise, we look for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells. Therefore, beloved, seeing that you look for these things, be diligent to be found in peace, without blemish and blameless in his sight." 2 Peter 3:13-14

These days many are rather being deceived into believing, there is no way the true believer of Christ can live a holy life. The true believer contrary to this notion is commanded to live a pure life. The main reason why Christ came to this world was to tackle the problem of sin;

"You know that he was revealed to take away our sins, and in him is no sin." 1 John 3:5

For this reason, it will be an insult to the grace of God to suggest that, the grace of God does not carry the power to deliver a man from his sins. The grace of God is still able to cause man to live blameless and spotless in this present dark world.

The writer of first Peter made us to understand, there is the true grace of God. If this is true then it also stands to infer, there is a false grace. The latter is what is being preached by many (either actively or passively)

suggesting, a believer cannot be pure. Paul instructed that we keep ourselves in sanctification (1 Thessalonians 4:3-4).

The 'prosperity' preachers normally preach a false grace which is contrary to the true grace God taught us through the writings of Paul. Paul in his letter to the church in Rome made it clear to us, we cannot continue in sin for grace to abound. He rather taught, more grace is always made available for true believers when sin is also on the ascendancy;

"The law came in besides, that the trespass might abound; but where sin abounded, grace abounded more exceedingly; that as sin reigned in death, even so grace might reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."
Romans 5:20-21

It is essentially in these dark moments that grace empowers us to live right with God and thus differentiates us from the people of the world as revealed in Philippians 2:13-16.

Right from the writings of the prophets, God had made it abundantly clear that, thick darkness will cover the

earth but in the face of such gross darkness, we are to arise and shine in order for the glory of God to be revealed in us;

"Arise, shine; for your light is come, and the glory of Yahweh is risen on you. For, behold, darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the peoples; but Yahweh will arise on you, and his glory shall be seen on you. Nations shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your rising." Isaiah 60:1-3

When Christ came into the scene to redeem man from sin, we were reminded of the prophecy in Isaiah 9:1-2 which concerned those who were in darkness and the necessity for the light of God to shine upon them;

"that it might be fulfilled which was spoken through Isaiah the prophet, saying, The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, toward the sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles, the people who sat in darkness saw a great light, to those who sat in the region and shadow of death, to them light has dawned. From that time, Jesus began to preach, and to say, "Repent! For the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand." Matthew 4:14-17

How can we still be in darkness after Christ has delivered us? Aren't we implying Christ failed in His bid to deliver mankind from sin? It however does not matter what our concepts or theology is. We were in darkness (true believers) and Christ came and brought us into His marvelous light (Colossians 1:13).

The writer of first John makes us to recognize, God is light and in Him there is no darkness at all. Therefore if we claim we are the sons of light then we also ought to walk in the light;

"If we say that we have fellowship with him and walk in the darkness, we lie, and don't tell the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanses us from all sin." 1 John 1:6-7

No matter how darkness or evil surrounds us, Christ's command to us is, we should let our light shine in order for our father in heaven to be glorified. We are therefore without excuse when it comes to fulfilling the command of the living God to shine and reflect His image on this earth. God will not ask us to do something He thinks it is not in our power to do. If He has therefore commanded us to shine, then it stands to reason, He has made

tremendous power available for us. Why do we have to allow the enemy to deceive us into slumbering and thinking we are helpless and cannot overpower sin (thereby making us conform to the world)?

According to the writings of Paul to the Roman church, he reminded us of what the grace of God is capable of doing. In the days of Elijah, God preserved over 7,000 souls who did not bow themselves to Baal in the dark times of Jewish history;

"Lord, they have killed your prophets, they have broken down your altars; and I am left alone, and they seek my life. But how does God answer him? "I have reserved for myself seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee to Baal. Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace." Romans 11:3-5

What does this tell us? Is grace not capable of preserving us from pollution and contamination from the world? God forbid, but to the contrary it is able to preserve us blameless and spotless.

So in times of darkness, when there is so much deception such that a lot of professing believers are

given 'spiritual lullabies' to put them to sleep and dream that God will overlook their sins, there should be the resounding call of Paul to us to awake to righteousness and not to sin.

Paul taught there were certain sins which are not supposed to be mentioned among believers but these days they are rather reigning in the lives of so many professing believers as revealed in Ephesians 2:1-3 and Ephesians 5:8-11.

Do you think God will allow us into His kingdom if we continue in such sins and even more? Certainly not, for we are rather supposed to reprove such acts of lawlessness so that men will be delivered from sinful habits and consequently the lake of fire.

There are believers who only appear pious before their leaders and fellow Christians. Such hypocrisy will never be entertained in the kingdom of God. The church in Philippi obeyed God in the presence of Paul but also did so even in his absence as already indicated previously. When you go further to study the Scriptures, you will realize we are supposed to shine forth as children of light by being blameless, harmless and without rebuke in these dark times. We are not being

encouraged to manage with the spiritual atmosphere and to entertain skeletons in our cupboards. We are simply supposed to shine as depicted in Matthew 5:16. Therefore, is there not a cause for us children of God to arise and call the sleeping church to awake from slumber and to build the broken walls of Christianity as in the days of Nehemiah?;

"Then answered I them, and said to them, The God of heaven, he will prosper us; therefore we his servants will arise and build: but you have no portion, nor right, nor memorial, in Jerusalem." Nehemiah 2:20

Surely the God of heaven will prosper us, in order for us to arise and rebuild the broken walls around our lives and the church at large. Thus, to fortify us against false grace which does not challenge us to awake to righteousness and purity. Child of God, do not be a dumb dog who cannot bark like some of the watchmen of Israel in Isaiah 56:10. Be not afraid because, God is able to establish you and to keep you from falling by the power of His grace;

"But the Lord is faithful, who will establish you, and guard you from the evil one." 2 Thessalonians 3:3

"Now to him who is able to keep them from stumbling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory in great joy," Jude 24

JUDGMENT IN THE HOUSE OF GOD

Let me make it clear by the grace of God that, no true child of God will feel comfortable to sit under the teachings of false prophets. If he finds himself in such an environment, in the process of time he will not feel comfortable and will flee from such enemies of the cross of Christ;

"These things I have written to you concerning those who would lead you astray. As for you, the anointing which you received from him remains in you, and you don't need for anyone to teach you. But as his anointing teaches you concerning all things, and is true, and is no lie, and even as it taught you, you will remain in him. Now, little children, remain in him, that when he appears, we may have boldness, and not be ashamed before him at his coming. If you know that he is righteous, you know that everyone who practices righteousness is born of him."
1John 2:26-29

JUDGMENT IN THE HOUSE OF GOD

The reason why some people continue to follow false prophets and teachers (as in enjoying their teachings) simply tells you, such people are under the judgment of the Lord already. We are made aware from the word of God that judgment is to begin in the house of God (1 Peter 4:17). You notice from 1 Peter 4:17, the time has come. This was written some thousand years ago and is greatly being fulfilled even in our time. How does this judgment happen in the house of God? Paul already made us aware;

"For the time will come when they will not listen to the sound doctrine, but, having itching ears, will heap up for themselves teachers after their own lusts; and will turn away their ears from the truth, and turn aside to fables." 2 Timothy 4:3-4

In the first place such congregations get such teachers simply because those teachers are also in love with the things their congregants are in love with. In the days of Ezekiel, God made it clear to him, if the people of Israel came to enquire of the prophet about the word of God, He (God) will answer them Himself using the prophet as a tool;

"For everyone of the house of Israel, or of the strangers who sojourn in Israel, who separates himself from me, and takes his idols into his heart, and puts the stumbling block of his iniquity before his face, and comes to the prophet to inquire for himself of me; I Yahweh will answer him by myself: and I will set my face against that man, and will make him an astonishment, for a sign and a proverb, and I will cut him off from the midst of my people; and you shall know that I am Yahweh. If the prophet be deceived and speak a word, I, Yahweh, have deceived that prophet, and I will stretch out my hand on him, and will destroy him from the midst of my people Israel. They shall bear their iniquity; the iniquity of the prophet shall be even as the iniquity of him who seeks [to him];" Ezekiel 14:7-10

We can understand from the scripture, God will deceive both the people as well as the prophet in order to have a basis to judge and punish the house of Israel. This scenario is not quite different from that of Micaiah the prophet. When King Ahab was bent on going to war not caring to know the mind of God concerning it, God had to deceive him through his (Ahab's) prophets as a form of judgment upon him;

"[Micaiah] said, 'Therefore hear you the word of Yahweh: I saw Yahweh sitting on his throne, and all the army of heaven standing on his right hand and on his left. Yahweh said, 'Who shall entice Ahab king of Israel, that he may go up and fall at Ramoth Gilead?' One spoke saying after this manner, and another saying after that manner. There came forth a spirit, and stood before Yahweh, and said, 'I will entice him.' Yahweh said to him, 'How?' He said, 'I will go forth, and will be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets.' He said, 'You shall entice him, and shall prevail also: go forth, and do so. 'Now therefore, behold, Yahweh has put a lying spirit in the mouth of these your prophets; and Yahweh has spoken evil concerning you.'"
2 Chronicles 18:18-22

From both scenarios (as in the case of Ezekiel and Micaiah), the message God wants us to take note of is, if we entertain idols in our hearts then there is no way we can know the genuine heart of God concerning any particular issue. Therefore, the professing believers of our time are greatly deceived simply because they have set up idols in their hearts which have subsequently led them to heap up for themselves teachers (who will speak to them according to those

idols they have set in their hearts). If anything comes on top of our priority list, then Jesus is not the love of our lives.

If we always seek first the kingdom, then Christ will be the love of our lives. Frankly speaking if you so love someone and the person does not make you his first priority, you will be displeased with him. For some people, their work has become their idol. Though hard work is encouraged in the Bible, it should not take the place of Christ. As for others, it is their academics or television. If we can give all our time and effort to our work, secular books and television without paying attention to matters of the faith, then why do we claim to love Christ? Shouldn't we humble ourselves and repent if we are bound to these idols? The call to most people is this, return to your first love;

*"But I have this against you, that you left your first love. Remember therefore from where you have fallen, and repent and do the first works; or else I am coming to you swiftly, and will move your lamp stand out of its place, unless you repent."
Revelation 2:4-5*

To throw more light on this subject and as to the reason why judgment is beginning in the house of God, let us visit one scripture in Deuteronomy where God purposed, there was coming a day He will reveal the idols in people's hearts;

"If there arise in the midst of you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and he gives you a sign or a wonder, and the sign or the wonder come to pass, of which he spoke to you, saying, Let us go after other gods, which you have not known, and let us serve them; you shall not listen to the words of that prophet, or to that dreamer of dreams: for Yahweh your God proves you, to know whether you love Yahweh your God with all your heart and with all your soul."
Deuteronomy 13:1-3

We realise from above that, God is really revealing the true character of people. Many are not really going to the house of God these days because they want to know Christ, but for their own personal gains. Let us bear in mind, the kingdom Christ commanded us to seek first is not about what so many are charmed with these days, but is rather righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. In effect, it is the great love Christ had

for us which made Him to give us the command to the effect that, we ought to love God with our all;

"you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength. This is the first commandment." Mark 12:30

When we love God with our all, there is no way Christ will play the second role in our lives. As a matter of fact we will not make idols in our hearts which will cause Him to permit false prophets and teachers to deceive us. Consequently, let us take note that, by putting Jesus first in our lives, we will not be among the congregation who heap up for themselves teachers who speak to them what they want to hear.

**WORSHIP GOD
ACCEPTABLY**

One of the reasons why most professing believers are not making any headway in their walk with the Lord is simply because they are not serving Him acceptably. It is not possible to be a true disciple of Jesus and not continue to advance in your spiritual journey with the Lord. By the authority of the following scripture, I see this to be true;

"I am the true vine, and my Father is the farmer. Every branch in me that doesn't bear fruit, he takes away. Every branch that bears fruit, he prunes, that it may bear more fruit. You are already pruned clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. Remain in me, and I in you. As the branch can't bear fruit by itself, unless it remains in the vine, so neither can you, unless you remain in me. I am the vine. You are the branches. He who remains in me, and I in him, the same bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing. If a man doesn't remain in me, he is thrown out as a branch, and is withered;

and they gather them, throw them into the fire, and they are burned.

If you remain in me, and my words remain in you, you will ask whatever you desire, and it will be done for you. In this is my Father glorified, that you bear much fruit; and so you will be my disciples. Even as the Father has loved me, I also have loved you. Remain in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will remain in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and remain in his love."
John 15:1-10

It has been made clear from the scripture above that, those who do not bear fruit are severed from the vine and those who bear fruit are pruned in order for them to continue bearing much fruit. He further went on to make us understand, it is by the bearing of much fruit which counts us among His true disciples.

Most people are being deceived into believing, God accepts their sacrifices of service even though they are not right with Him. There is no way God will accept a person's sacrifice whereas the individual is not in right standing with Him. You are first of all accepted and then your sacrifice. A lot of professing believers try to

overlook certain important scriptures such as Psalm 66:18;

"If I cherished sin in my heart, The Lord wouldn't have listened".

From this scripture the Psalmist was bringing to our knowledge that, if we entertain sin in our lives then there is no way God is going to hear us. Even in the days of Amos, God instructed him to tell the people of Israel to take away their songs away from Him because of their sins;

"I hate, I despise your feasts, and I can't stand your solemn assemblies. Yes, though you offer me your burnt offerings and meal offerings, I will not accept them; neither will I regard the peace offerings of your fat animals. Take away from me the noise of your songs! I will not listen to the music of your harps. But let justice roll on like rivers, and righteousness like a mighty stream." Amos 5:21-24

Per the scripture above, it is possible most gatherings are a nuisance to God because they are not living upright lives. We may sing and dance round but God will not accept it no matter how we convince ourselves.

These days entertainment has rather taken the place of the joy of the Holy Spirit. Paul in his letter to the church in Rome gave us a hint as to how we could serve God acceptably;

*"Therefore I urge you, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service."
Romans 12:1*

The starting point of serving God therefore is to present our bodies as a living sacrifice to Him in a holy state. It is not what we think constitute the acceptable ways of God which matters, but serving Him with a renewed mind just according to the above quoted scripture. God commanded the people of Israel in the days of Isaiah that, the wicked should forsake his ways and his thoughts;

"let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return to Yahweh, and he will have mercy on him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon." Isaiah 55:7

When we become believers we are not supposed to serve God in the way that seems right unto us, for it

may not be approved in the sight of God (Proverbs 14:12).

"But my people didn't listen to my voice. Israel desired none of me. So I let them go after the stubbornness of their hearts, that they might walk in their own counsels." Psalm 81:11-12

God therefore expects us to possess the mind of Christ which brings about an automatic change of character, acceptable in the sight of God;

*"For who has known the mind of the Lord, that he should instruct him?" But we have Christ's mind."
1 Corinthians 2:16*

Many have continuously deceived themselves into believing, it is God who is working within them. They often quote the following scripture;

"For it is God who works in you both to will and to work, for his good pleasure." Philippians 2:13

For us to fully understand this scripture, let me ask if the way some professing believers really live their lives (which is not different from the people of the world) is

really according to the good pleasure of God? How can a child of light continue to fellowship with darkness and still claim to please God. On the contrary Paul meant, if God is working in you for His good pleasure, then you will work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.

Another reason why most professing believer's sacrifices are not acceptable before God is because of pride as revealed in 2 Chronicles 7:14-15. In this scripture, the Lord was calling the nation Israel to humility and repentance. A people become proud when they are worldly. According to the writer of James, anyone who falls in love with the world is proud in the sight of God;

"You ask, and don't receive, because you ask with wrong motives, so that you may spend it for your pleasures. You adulterers and adulteresses, don't you know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. Or do you think that the Scripture says in vain, "The Spirit who lives in us yearns jealously"? But he gives more grace. Therefore it says, "God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble. Be subject therefore to God. But

resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Lament, mourn, and weep. Let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he will exalt you." James 4:3-10

This accounts for the stagnated growth of so many professing believers. By the time all our prayers are full of the quest for earthly possessions, are we not minding earthly things (thereby making ourselves enemies of God)? How on earth can an enemy of God advance in Him? This is why so many do not have a fruitful walk with the Lord [for friendship with the world is enmity with God (Philippians 3:18-19)].

Let us therefore remember we were created for the pleasure of God. God created us in order to derive satisfaction first of all from our lives as we serve Him acceptably in His way. This is possible by presenting our bodies to Him as living sacrifices in holiness and hating this present world and its systems.

ARE YOU BEING ACCEPTED BY THE WORLD?

A question running through my mind and which I wish you would ponder over is - "does light resemble darkness in any way?" If one claims to be a child of God and still fellowships with darkness then how can he claim to be a disciple of Christ? The writer of first Peter makes us to understand, we are a peculiar people;

"But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, that you may proclaim the excellence of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light:" 1 Peter 2:9

How then can we be said to be peculiar when in actual fact our lives cannot be differentiated from the world in word and in deed. Jesus told His disciples, so far as men hated Him they will also be hated by the world;

"If the world hates you, you know that it has hated me before it hated you." John 15:18

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If this was the clear teachings of Jesus Christ to His disciples, then why are so many of us being accepted by the people of the world? Even unbelievers are so much pleased with the messages of some preachers of our days. No wonder Ignatius, in his *Letter to the Romans* 3.3; ca. A.D. 110, had a clear understanding of the above scripture as revealed in his statement; “Christianity is not a matter of persuasive words. It is a matter of true greatness as long as it is hated by the world”. According to the word of God the preaching of the cross is an offense to those who believe not;

"And I, brethren, if I yet preach circumcision, why do I yet suffer persecution? then is the offence of the cross ceased." Galatians 5:11 KJV

Therefore if our messages do not offend the world, then it means we are not actually preaching the cross of Christ. It is however important for us to know, the cross is the centrality of our Christian faith as it stands for our redemption from sin and the glorification of God;

"For the word of the cross is foolishness to those who are dying, but to us who are saved it is the power of God." 1 Corinthians 1:18 check also Colossians 2:14-15.

ARE YOU BEING ACCEPTED BY THE WORLD?

Though the preaching of the cross may sound foolish to the people of the world, to us it is the power of God unto salvation. No wonder hell will always wage war against those who preach the cross to place a demand on men to be crucified to the world and its affections. This means, the cross will liberate souls from being slaves to Satan the whole of their lives. The reason Satan has deceived many preachers not to preach the cross is because he made a very big mistake by crucifying Jesus on the cross;

*"Which none of the rulers of this world has known.
For had they known it, they wouldn't have crucified
the Lord of glory." 1 Corinthians 2:8*

From this scripture we realize, if Satan had known the value of Christ's death on the cross then he wouldn't have crucified Him. If therefore he made such a big mistake then why now permit men to preach the cross which is the power of God unto salvation to everyone who believes? He has now succeeded in blinding so many to the extent, they cannot see the cross not to even talk of preaching it. He (Satan) can however permit them to preach about it. The difference is, those who preach the cross live it whereas those who preach

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about the cross only talk about it. The former's sword always 'touches blood' and that of the latter is just a weapon to be admired and kept as a spiritual monument in the museum of a dead congregation. Paul knew the danger in associating with the world and thus made this profound statement in scripture;

*"But far be it from me to boast, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world."
Galatians 6:14*

It is only by the virtue of Christ's crucifixion on the cross that we can be crucified to the world and the world to us (we will be in the world but have nothing to do with the unfruitful works of darkness). According to Paul, we as children of light are therefore supposed to expose the deeds of darkness but not to be partakers of it;

*"Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather even reprove them."
Ephesians 5:11*

Most professing believers join the world most at times to even ridicule the cross through sharing of 'dirty' jokes and taking delight in certain worldly amusements. The

modern preachers are the worst culprits when it comes to going to bed with the world. How can they preach against the world when they themselves have been overcome by the world? Our faith instead, is to overcome the world and not to claim it;

"For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world: your faith." 1 John 5:4

"You are of God, little children, and have overcome them; because greater is he who is in you than he who is in the world. They are of the world. Therefore they speak of the world, and the world hears them. We are of God. He who knows God listens to us. He who is not of God doesn't listen to us. By this we know the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error." 1 John 4:4-6

Since these preachers have fallen in love with the world and always want to move according to the patterns of this world, they always have regard for men because of advantage;

"These are murmurers and complainers, walking after their lusts (and their mouth speaks proud things), showing respect of persons to gain advantage." Jude 16

ARE YOU BEING ACCEPTED BY THE WORLD?

Why is it that in the face of the spiritual bankruptcy of our generation they are never moved to cry for the dying souls of men and to warn their congregation of false prophets? Is it because they themselves are of the number? This tells us, they don't have love for the souls of men but they serve their belly as Philippians 3:19 attests.

If not why can't they sacrifice for their congregants? Professing believers rather call them fathers, while in actual fact they do not much up to it. If you contest what I am saying then check out the following scripture for yourself;

"Behold, this is the third time I am ready to come to you, and I will not be a burden to you; for I seek not your possessions, but you. For the children ought not to save up for the parents, but the parents for the children. I will most gladly spend and be spent for your souls. If I love you more abundantly, am I loved the less? But be it so, I did not myself burden you. But, being crafty, I caught you with deception. Did I take advantage of you by anyone of them whom I have sent to you? I exhorted Titus, and I sent the

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brother with him. Did Titus take any advantage of you? Didn't we walk in the same spirit? Didn't we walk in the same steps?" 2 Corinthians 12:14-18

Paul taught, true fathers rather sacrifice for their children but do not make gain out of them. True fathers act as watchmen to guard the souls God has entrusted into their care. For this reason Paul used to weep while writing to the church of Corinth and when preaching just because he loved the souls of men for who they were and not for what they gave him;

"Therefore watch, remembering that for a period of three years I didn't cease to admonish everyone night and day with tears. Now, brothers, I entrust you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build up, and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified. I coveted no one's silver, or gold, or clothing." Acts 20:31-33

Why do you think such a godly man will be weeping? Is it not because of what he feared wolves would do to the souls who were being won? Let no one deceive you that when you come to church that is all. You need to work out your salvation with fear and trembling. If a man knows how dreadful and horrible hell is, he will warn

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others with passion and weep for them lest they are damned. Christ came to plug men from the jaws of hell. Why then sit and watch unconcerned while men are burdened with so many sins?

It was not only Paul who wept for the souls of men but even Jeremiah in his days. Jeremiah continued to warn Israel and to deliver the message of God to them but they would not listen to him. Knowing the judgment which comes along with disobedience, Jeremiah used to weep bitterly for the children of Israel;

"My eye runs down with streams of water, for the destruction of the daughter of my people. My eye pours down, and doesn't cease, without any intermission," Lamentation 3:48-49

Look carefully at his choice of words, do they seem like an exaggeration to you (though is in the figurative sense)? These men only loved the people of God and did not want them to be destroyed and this generated tears of plea for them to live in obedience to God. Paul did not only weep, but also travailed in order for Christ to be formed in the lives of those who listened to Him;

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*"My little children, of whom I am again in travail
until Christ is formed in you" Galatians 4:19*

To the contrary, the reason so many preachers only seek to please men is because of advantage as we have earlier learned and not because they are servants of Christ. According to the meaning of servanthood, anything you yield yourself to obey is your master. If you preach to suit what men want to hear, that means you are not a servant of God. However, when you seek to please God you will lay down your life (deny yourself) for others as an act of service to God. In effect service to God becomes a service to man and not the other way round. Paul made it clear if he sought to please men, then he was not a servant of God;

*"For am I now seeking the favor of men, or of God?
Or am I striving to please men? For if I were still
pleasing men, I wouldn't be a servant of Christ."
Galatians 1:10*

When we preach the cross it will attract persecution even from people who claim to serve God but in truth do not even know what they are talking about. Christ told His disciples, a time was coming when those who

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persecute or even kill them will think they are doing God a service as depicted in John 16:1-2. The truth is, they will do it because they don't know the father. If anyone does not know the father then it means he is not a child of God (1 John 2:13). If they do not know the father, it is simply because they did not accept the son or embrace the message of the cross;

*"But all these things will they do to you for my name's sake, because they don't know him who sent me."
John 15:21*

So you can see why even some professing believers will be mad at some of us for speaking the truth? The reason is, in the first place they have not embraced the cross. Jesus told His disciples He was going to send them the Holy Spirit who is the Spirit of truth. He however added that the world cannot receive the Spirit of truth;

"the Spirit of truth, whom the world can't receive; for it doesn't see him, neither knows him. You know him, for he lives with you, and will be in you." John 14:17

ARE YOU BEING ACCEPTED BY THE WORLD?

The reason why the world cannot receive the Spirit of truth is because the world's systems are based on lies but lies and truth are enemies just like light and darkness. How then can you be truthful and the world will still accept you? If the world accepts you then it is either you are not a child of light or you have compromised with your Christian stands. Thus why the writer of first John tells us, we should not be surprised when the world hates us (if we are walking in truth);

"Don't be surprised, my brothers, if the world hates you." 1 John 3:13

This I believe he learned from Christ when He told them they should not be offended when they are being hated for His sake (John 16:1). Upon reading Eberhard Arnold's book, *The Early Christians in their own words*, I came across the convictions of a believer in *Letter to Diognetus* 5, 6 (end of second century) and I believe it will be helpful in throwing more light on the subject matter in this chapter. The writer goes like this "Christians cannot be distinguished from the rest of humankind by country, speech, or customs. They do not live in cities of their own; they do not speak a special language; they do not follow a peculiar manner of life.

Their teaching was not invented by the ingenuity or speculation of men, nor do they advocate mere book learning, as other groups do. They live in Greek cities and they live in non-Greek cities according to the lot of each one. They conform to the customs of their country in dress, food, and the general mode of life, and yet they show a remarkable, an admittedly extraordinary structure of their own life together. They live in their own countries, but only as guests and aliens. They take part in everything as citizens and endure everything as aliens. Every foreign country is their homeland, and every homeland is a foreign country to them. They marry like everyone else. They beget children, but they do not expose them after they are born. They have a common table, but no common bed. They are in the flesh, but they do not live according to the flesh. They live on earth, but their citizenship is in heaven. They obey the established laws, but through their way of life they surpass these laws. They love all people and are persecuted by all. Nobody knows them, and yet they are condemned. They are put to death, and just through this they are brought to life. They are as poor as beggars, and yet they make many rich. They lack everything, and yet they have everything in abundance.

They are dishonored, and yet have their glory in this very dishonor. They are insulted, and just in this they are vindicated. They are abused, and yet they bless. They are assaulted, and yet it is they who show respect. Doing good, they are sentenced like evildoers. When punished with death, they rejoice in the certainty of being awakened to life. Jews attack them as people of another race, and Greeks persecute them, yet those who hate them cannot give any reason to justify their hostility. In a word: what the soul is in the body, the Christians are in the world. As the soul is present in all the members of the body, so Christians are present in all the cities of the world. As the soul lives in the body, yet does not have its origin in the body, so the Christians live in the world yet are not of the world. Invisible, the soul is enclosed by the visible body: in the same way the Christians are known to be in the world, but their religion remains invisible. Even though the flesh suffers no wrong from the soul, it hates the soul and fights against it because it is hindered by the soul from following its lusts; so too the world, though suffering no wrong from the Christians, hates them because they oppose its lusts. The soul loves the flesh, but the flesh hates the soul; as the soul loves the

members of the body, so the Christians love those who hate them. The soul is enclosed in the body, yet it holds the body together; the Christians are kept prisoners in the world, as it were, yet they are the very ones who hold the world together. Immortal, the soul lives in a mortal house; so too the Christians live in a corruptible existence as strangers and look forward to incorruptible life in heaven. When the body is poorly provided with food and drink, the soul gains strength. In the same way the number of Christians increases day by day when they are punished with death. Such is the important task God has entrusted to the Christians and they must not shirk it”.

Let us therefore bear in mind, if we are light then we have nothing to do with darkness. There is no way darkness can mix with light (as in being separate, but not in isolation - Warren. W. Wiersbe). Thus, they are two separate entities. In the final analysis light reigns so let us be encouraged, in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation we can shine forth as light to the glory of God. Amen.

ARE YOU PREPARED FOR CHRIST'S SECOND COMING?

Please note that...

The first Adam disobeyed God and because of his disobedience sin entered the human race, resulting in the spiritual death and separation of man from God; “Therefore, as sin entered into the world through one man, and death through sin; and so death passed to all men, because all sinned...So then as through one trespass, all men were condemned; even so through one act of righteousness, all men were justified to life.” Romans 5:12-13, 18.

The last Adam (Jesus Christ) obeyed God in order to take away sin from the human race; “But God commends His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” Romans 5:8.

Your part of the arrangement is to receive the grace or free gift of God's salvation by faith (Romans 4:16-17).

You must understand, faith without works is dead, so God expects you to obey as you receive this free but

costly gift of salvation with your free will; “But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become God's children, to those who believe in his name: who were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.” John 1:12-13.

The most important decision you have to make now is to be born again (John 3:1-8). Being born again is to repent of your sins and to submit yourself to be baptized by immersion (and not by sprinkling) as well as receive the Holy Spirit; “Peter said to them, “Repent, and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.” Acts 2:38.

The grace of God is not a license for you to sin, but rather to receive strength to live in obedience to God's word (Titus 2:11-14).

You therefore have to (as a matter of necessity), live a holy life and walk as Christ did, and not to live in hypocrisy;

“However God's firm foundation stands, having this seal, “The Lord knows those who are His, and, “Let everyone who names the name of the Lord depart

from unrighteousness." 2 Timothy 2:19.

"Everyone who has this hope set on Him purifies himself, even as He is pure." 1 John 3:3.

If you walk in the light of the above scriptures and make 2 Peter 1:2-10 your guiding principle, you will never live a defeated Christian life, thereby ensuring you are found in Christ even at His glorious appearing.

I however caution that you beware of people who preach Another Gospel, Another Jesus and Another Spirit as in line with 2 Corinthians 11:1-4.

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